

## 3rd MAW completes longest deployment

3rd MAW Public Affairs

*Press Release*

AL ASAD, Iraq -- The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing has completed the longest deployment of its 62-year history.

The Miramar, Calif. based command arrived in February 2004 at this former Iraqi air base to support Operation Iraqi Freedom II, deploying more than 13,000 service members and 200 aircraft over the course of the 13-month span.

Wing aircraft flew close air and convoy support missions and ground support units escorted convoys and kept aircraft well maintained and in the air.

The command was based primarily out at Al Asad, located about 120 miles northwest of Baghdad, and at numerous other Forward-Operating Bases across Al Anbar province in western



*Cpl. Paul Leicht*

A CH-53E Super Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 166 (Reinforced), Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, prepares to conduct an external lift of an armored vehicle Jan. 9 to a shooting range near Al Asad, Iraq. The Wing recently completed the longest deployment of its 62-year history.

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## 3/4 "Doc" builds faith in Iraq

**Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.**

*2nd Marine Division*

CAMP ABU GHURAYB, Iraq -- Sweat poured down his forehead with every swing of the pickaxe, the ground splitting before the force of the blows. Neither the burning sun nor the hard ground would stop him, the time was right.

Hospitalman 3rd Class Kipp A. Petry, a 42-year-old corpsman with 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team-1, had an

epiphany while he sped through his day aboard Camp Abu Ghurayb, Iraq.

Petry decided he would be baptized, and Iraq seemed the perfect place.

"Something inside me said it's right," said the El Paso, Texas native, "something said now is the time to do it, and what better place to do it?"

On Feb. 19, Petry approached the battalion's religious program specialist, Petty Officer 2nd Class Aaron G. Neely, to make his request. After a dis-

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cussion with the chaplain, Neely came back to Petry with an eager approval.

Neely began preparations almost immediately, but was stopped by an unexpected request from Petry.

"I was just going to have the engineers dig the pit, but Petry said no, he was going to do it," Neely said.

Petry began working on the pit immediately, with Neely by his side,

using a shovel and pickaxe to make a grave worthy of the ceremony.

The pair worked tirelessly, using their free time to work on the project, while gaining a sense of accomplishment with each swing of the pickaxe.

"Every time I removed a chunk of ground, I felt as if I was removing an old part of my life. I couldn't stop," Petry said.

The digging portion of the project was slated to be a weeklong endeavor,

but the pair finished in three days.

Over the next few days, sandbags were placed along the sides of the pit and a sheet of plastic was placed over the sandbags to keep the water clean.

"It held more significance to me because I took an active part in preparing it," Petry explained, "I'm a worker and I was blessed to be able to do it."

Petry's baptism, attended by his friends, fellow enlisted service members and a number of officers, took place the following Sunday.

"We had at least 15-20 people there," said Navy Lt. Matthew S. Weems, the battalion chaplain and 33-year-old native of Kingfisher, Okla., "from his company's guys to battalion staff. It was good."

For Petry, the elation of having such a good turnout and the strong sense of accomplishment, was only outdone by what he felt as he was being baptized.

"When I got in the water it was heavy, like it was pushing in on me," Petry said, "but when I came back up, the weight was lifted. It felt great!"

Although it was Petry who worked so hard to build it, he knew when he started that he would not be the only one to benefit.

"I built it for those who need it," Petry said. "It wasn't just for me."



*Lance Cpl. Paul Robbins Jr.*

Navy Lt. Matthew S. Weems, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team-1's 33-year-old chaplain from Kingfisher, Okla., submerses Hospitalman 3rd Class Kipp A. Petry, a 42-year-old El Paso, Texas native, under water during a baptism aboard Camp Abu Ghurayb, Iraq Sunday.

### Notes and asides *Camp Fallujah*

#### **Worship Services & Bible Study Schedule**

##### **Friday**

11:30 a.m. - Catholic Mass  
1 p.m. - Muslim prayer  
6 p.m. - Jewish worship service  
7:30 p.m. - Gospel choir

##### **Saturday**

6 p.m. - Catholic Mass  
7 p.m. - Protestant communion  
8 p.m. - Apostolic/  
Pentacostal Bible study

#### **MWR events**

**Swinging Sunday:** There will be swing dancing lessons held at the

MWR recreation center from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring a partner.

For more information about MWR events, contact the MWR supervisor at:  
[crystal.nadeau@halliburton.com](mailto:crystal.nadeau@halliburton.com)

**Comedy Night:** The LFOR Comedy Show starring Jim McCue and Joe Carroll is scheduled to be held Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Base Theater.

# 5th CAG begins tour of duty

**Capt. Julianne Sohn**  
5th Civil Affairs Group

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – The 5th Civil Affairs Group (CAG) officially started its tour of duty in Iraq when the commanding officer and sergeant major unfurled their unit's colors at a transfer of authority ceremony with the 4th CAG on Thursday.

Colonel Steve McKinley, 5th CAG commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. John A. Ellis stood at attention as the 4th CAG commander and sergeant major cased their colors at the old base theater.

"A strategic victory is still not settled, but it's close" said Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, I Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, who spoke to the CAG Marines and Sailors at the event. "I challenge the 5th CAG as I challenged the 4th."

Sattler thanked Col. John R. Ballard, 4th CAG commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. Joseph A. Staudt for leading their Marines and Sailors over the past seven months and pointed out their major accomplishments such as helping to establish the Civil Military Operations Center in Fallujah.

"4th CAG was the one that made

things happen," said Sattler. "Thanks to 4th CAG. You cased your colors here, but you can uncased them when you get home and hold it higher."

Ballard thanked his Marines after the general spoke and said the Iraqis appreciated the Marines helping them get started on reconstruction projects.

"We were very lucky," Ballard said. "We did exactly what we were trained and meant to do."

The 5th CAG will operate in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq and has been working with the 4th CAG for the nearly a month to ensure a seamless transition of current civil affairs projects.

"We are going to go out and get the job done," said McKinley.



*Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland*  
Col. Steve McKinley, 5th CAG commanding officer, unfurls the organizational colors during the transfer of authority ceremony Thursday.

## Scout (FORWARD)

**I Marine Expeditionary Force**

Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, Commanding General  
Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent, Sergeant Major

Public Affairs Director.....Col. Jenny M. Holbert  
Deputy Director.....Maj. Francis P. Piccoli  
Public Affairs Chief.....Master Sgt. Kelley S. Ramsey  
Press Chief/Editor.....Staff Sgt. Ronna M. Weyland

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## Scouting Around (Forward)

**What other types of services would you like to see here?**



**Gunnery Sgt. Ernest M. Aguayo**  
PSD, II MEF

"A larger workout facility would be nice. I spent some time at the Horn of Africa. We had a pretty large gym."



**Sgt. Mike A. Bruno**  
Combat Service Support Detachment 28

"I was here during the first round and things have really improved since then. I did not expect it to be this nice."



**Pfc. Nathaniel T. Lerum**  
3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment

"It would be nice to have a place to ride four-wheelers or dirtbikes in my spare time."

# Marines, Army kick it with Iraqi children

**Cpl. John E. Lawson Jr.**  
*2nd Force Service Support Group*

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq -- In the dusty little lakeside village of Al Kabani, Iraq, the children rush to the streets as a U.S. convoy pulls into town. The convoy, comprised of Marines from the 1st and 2nd Force Service Support Groups (Forward), of Camp Pendleton, Calif., and Camp Lejeune, N.C., respectively, and the Army's 2nd Battalion, 112th Armor, 36th Infantry of Austin, Texas, have come to continue civil affairs operations in the village.

Saturday's mission included distribution of humanitarian aid supplies to the more than 60 homes in the town, surveying the site for possible future civil affairs projects and paying an existing contract within the village.

Supplies distributed included soap, toothpaste and other hygiene items not easily available to the villagers, as well as more than 100 soccer balls donated by the Green Hills Country Club of Millbrae, Calif.

According to an article published in the San Mateo County Times, the country club raised nearly \$4,000 to buy soccer balls for Iraqi children in 2004.

The country club sent 1,100 soccer balls to Camp Taqaddum for distribution to Iraqi villages, said Lt. Col. Michael H. Gellick, civil affairs officer for 1st FSSG.

The country club's attention was caught by Maj. William C. Maples, force protection officer for 1st FSSG during its first rotation to Iraq in early 2004. Maples, who frequently runs "The Badwater," a 135-mile annual ultra marathon in Death Valley Na-



*Cpl. John E. Lawson Jr.*

Lt. Col. Michael H. Gellick, civil affairs officer, 1st Force Service Support Group (Forward), passes bags of humanitarian aid supplies to Iraqi children during a civil affairs mission to Al Kabani Saturday. During the mission the Cleveland native and other Marines from the 1st and 2d FSSGs, along with Soldiers from the Army's 2nd Battalion, 112th Armor, 36th Infantry, distributed supplies and soccer balls to the town of about 60 homes.

tional Park in California, was unable to participate in the 2004 race due to his deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Gellick, a Cleveland native.

Maples ran 135 miles in less than 40 hours in Iraq coinciding with "The Badwater." His efforts attracted sponsors who donated school supplies for local children, Gellick said.

Clean water is a major issue to the citizens of Al Kabani, he said. They currently use unpurified water from Lake Habbiniyah and a limited supply of fresh water from a neighboring village for their water needs. That supply is from earlier civil affairs projects completed by 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment and 2d Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment.

The proposed water tower and fil-

tration system projects would greatly improve the village's access to clean water, Gellick said.

Other projects already completed in the village include building a soccer field, refurbishing the school and improving the electrical power grid, he said.

The contract paid during this trip was for an existing agreement with the village mukhtar for trash collection and village clean up.

"We pay him in private and he pays the people," Ortiz said. "This lets him show his people he is still in charge. We aren't in control of this town; [the villagers] are."

The town has been extremely friendly to U.S. forces, he added. "They tell us we don't need helmets;

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# ACE excels during River Blitz

**Cpl. C. Alex Herron**  
*2nd Marine Aircraft Wing*

AL ASAD, Iraq -- Recently Marines, Sailors and Soldiers attached to the 1st Marine Division and Iraqi Security Forces increased security operations throughout the Al Anbar Province for Operation River Blitz.

The security measures in and around Ramadi, were designed to ensure the safety of the local Iraqis from insurgents by controlling access into the city.

"We were asked by the Iraqi government to increase our security operations in the city to locate, isolate and defeat anti-Iraqi forces and terrorists, who are intent on preventing a peaceful transition of power between the interim Iraqi government and the Iraqi transitional government," said Maj. Gen. Richard F. Natonski, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division.

The 1st Marine Division also increased security in several cities along

the Euphrates River, including the cities of Hit, Baghdadi and Hadithah.

The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing began the air operations in support of River Blitz and then officially turned over responsibility to 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing.

Before any aircraft could fly in support of River Blitz, requests for air support had to be turned in to the aviation combat elements operations section so they could formulate an air tasking order.

"We chose which missions to fly based on the availability of aircraft and mission priority," said Lt. Col. John Kane, future operations officer, aviation combat element, and Littleton, Colo. native.

With the massive number of requests coming in for aviation support, the missions were prioritized.

"We always have more request than available aircraft," Kane said. "It is a challenge to fulfill all of the requests, but we ensured we did not put anyone

in a bind."

The diversity of aircraft types aboard Al Asad, Iraq allowed 2nd MAW to use a variety of aircraft for the different types of missions during River Blitz.

"We had our CH-46s providing troop transport and casualty evacuation missions, while the Army's 571st Medical Company (Air Ambulance) took care of medical evacuations," Kane said.

The Marines' CH-46s took care of the casevac missions that go to the battlefield to transport casualties to a care facility, while the 571st's Blackhawks transported casualties from a treatment center to higher levels of care.

The AH-1W Super Cobras and UH-1N Hueys from Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron 269 provided close air support for the fight on the ground.

The AV-8B Harriers and crews of Marine Attack Squadron 311 flew many of the sorties for fixed wing aircraft fell on the shoulders of the Tomcats.

"The Tomcats picked up the slack and did a phenomenal job," Kane said. "They were there while our Hornet squadron was winding down from their deployment."

The aviation combat element proved to be an integral part of the Marines fighting force.

"The ACE provides flexibility of movement with the element of surprise," Kane said. "Marine aviation boasts the most lethal firepower the MAGTF has in its arsenal. The coordination between the aviation combat element and the ground combat element was key to the success of this operation."



*Cpl. Rocco DeFilippis*

Two Marines with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 264 begin the preflight checks on their CH-46 Sea Knight. The Black Knights were one of many squadrons who participated in Operation River Blitz.

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Iraq. The wing saw major combat action over Fallujah in April 2004, in An Najaf in August 2004 and then again in Fallujah during Operation Al Fajr, or "New Dawn" in November.

During the second battle to destroy insurgents in Fallujah, Marine and multinational aircraft supported Iraqi security forces and U.S. Marines and Soldiers on the ground with aerial reconnaissance, precision air strikes and casualty evacuation missions.

In a two-week span, multinational force aircraft, comprised mostly of jets and helicopters from 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, dropped or launched more than 500 precision-guided munitions against terrorist targets in the city.

The airspace above Fallujah was controlled by the Marine Aircraft Wing, which meant managing as many as 25 combat aircraft at a time, aloft over the urban battlefield. In this dense urban environment of nine square miles, and more than 10,000 friendly troops in action, there were no incidents of

air-to-ground friendly fire.

The wing not only supported combat operations but was also integral in the success of the Iraqi election on Jan. 30, 2005. Wing helicopters and transport planes ferried more than 1,500 Independent Election Commission of Iraq poll workers to voting sites throughout Al Anbar Province, enabling the nation to hold its first free election in more than 50 years.

Active duty forces comprised most of the deployed wing, but reserve units played an integral part, deploying as a whole unit or as individual augments. During the first rotation of forces from February to September of 2004, reserves comprised approximately 10 percent of the air wing, but during the second rotation, from September 2004 to March 2005, reserve participation shot up to 20 percent.

Not all Marines will be returning with the wing. Sadly, eight Marines died while serving during the deployment and 222 were injured.

The deployment in statistics:

- \* Transported 40 million pounds of cargo

- \* Ferried more than 100,000 passengers across the country

- \* More than 75,000 flight hours flown

- \* Driven more than 400,000 miles for various convoy operations that carried more than 61 million pounds of cargo.

- \* Provided security for more than 5,400 metric tons of unexploded ordnance.

- \* Disposed of more than 2 million pounds of enemy ordnance

- \* Conducted More than 1,000 security patrols

- \* Pumped in excess of 25.5 million gallons of fuel to support combat operations throughout the theater.

- \* Executed more than 200,000 air traffic operations at the various airfields and forward operating bases.

The 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing has transferred the aviation authority and responsibility for western Iraq as of March 1 to 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, which is based out of Cherry Point, N.C. This is 2nd MAW's first deployment as a wing for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## Children, from Page 4

we are safe here."

During some civil affairs missions, the local Iraqis learn to trust the Americans.

The advancement of the Iraqi civilization also provides footing for them to stand on their own, without an American presence, he added.

"Civil affairs missions build rapport with the people," Gellick said. "It improves their economy and their standard of living."

He said the relationship between the village and the U.S. forces has vastly improved since he arrived

here in August 2004. "We are trying to improve their lives without getting in their way, letting them live their lives."

This particular mission differed slightly because, for several of the Marines on the convoy, this was their only trip outside the camp during their seven-month deployment.

"[Getting these Marines outside of the camp] lets them know why we are here," said Gunnery Sgt. Robert Sands, anti-terrorism force protection chief for 1st FSSG and Camp Taqaddum.

"They see their workload is more than beans, band-aids and bullets; it's a human relationship," added the Baltimore native.

Corporal Magnolia Sexton, nuclear, biological and chemical defense technician, said, "It was good to get out and see the people's faces, to see what we do here."

"It's always a good feeling to help, especially children," said Sands. "I have two children of my own and I wouldn't want them to live like [these children do]."

# '1/6 hard' leaves Lejeune

**Cpl. Mike Escobar**  
*2nd Marine Division*

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. -- First Battalion, Sixth Marine Regiment's main body of troops left Camp Lejeune Wednesday.

The unit will relieve 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment based in Camp Pendleton, Calif. to continue rooting out insurgents, seeking out weapons caches and helping Iraqi Security Forces provide security and stability in the area.

"We are deploying during a decisive time in the continuing development of Iraq, so you can expect the Marines and Sailors of 1/6 to be involved everyday in making a difference," stated Lt. Col. William M. Jurney, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment's battalion commander and Statesville, N.C. native. "Whether we are working to restore essential support facilities or working with the development of the local police and security forces, our 1/6 team will be making a difference in bringing peace and stability to the people of Iraq."

According to Capt. Ed Burns, 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment's assistant operations officer, the unit will conduct similar missions to those 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment performed. This includes patrolling the area searching for terrorists and illegal arms and restoring Fallujah's infrastructure by rebuilding schools, hospitals and homes.

"3/5 has done a lot of great things in the area we're going to be in and were instrumental in the fight for Fallujah," the 36-year-old Bethesda,

Md. native stated. "They maintained a very aggressive hunt for weapons and insurgents since the fall of 2004, and now we're going to continue along the same path."

The 1997 Arizona State University graduate also said 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment personnel will help train Iraqi military and civil law forces, teaching them to gain and maintain security and stability in their communities.

This will be beneficial for all Iraqi citizens, Burns continued.

"If operations keep on going the way they've been so far, and we continue getting rid of insurgents and ammunition, it will help the Iraqis see that we're there to help them, and that they can trust us."

Burns also said he feels confident in 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment's ability to succeed at the

mission ahead.

"I feel absolutely fantastic in that we have an extensive amount of combat experience in the battalion. The leadership from the NCO (noncommissioned officer) level up will facilitate the tasks we have to perform."

Jurney agreed with Burns and also thanked the deploying Marines' and sailors' loved ones.

"The encouragement and support the families have shown the Marines and Sailors of 1/6 are the foundation from which we draw both our strength of purpose and peace of mind to serve. I am proud to have the privilege to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with such a fine group of young Americans, and equally as proud to stand with the families and friends who have courageously been by our side."



*Cpl. Mike Escobar*

1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment troops prepare to board a bus headed for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. The unit's final destination will be Fallujah, Iraq, where they will conduct security and stability operations and help rebuild the city's infrastructure.

# It's never too hot in the kitchen

**Sgt. Stephen D'Alessio**

*2nd Marine Division*

CAMP BLUE DIAMOND, RAMADI, Iraq -- After the events on Sept. 11, 2001, many Americans re-evaluated the security of both their lives and their jobs. Among them was Ryan Amador.

Though Amador grew up in east Los Angeles, the effects of that tragic day reached his home from the opposite coast. Now, the corporal is one of the proud veterans claiming the responsibility of protecting his country and job security. Amador is a food services specialist with Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, which recently deployed here to conduct stability and security operations as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

His unit is part of the ground combat element in the Sunni Triangle, an extremely volatile region in the Al Anbar province.

Just a few years ago, he never would have expected to be serving his country in such a way.

"I always wanted to do something to help out," said the 22-year-old. "Back in L.A., I used to be a dialysis technician for a local clinic. One of the first things I thought about was job security, so my friend turned me on to the Navy. But I decided that if I were to join, I'd have to be with the Marines because we have so much pride in our service."

And the pride has taken the 2001 Our Lady of the Angels Academy, Atimonan, Philippines graduate a long way. Amador's superiors put him in a leadership position, charging him with one of the biggest responsibilities on this base. It is a responsibility that could mean the



*Sgt. Stephen D'Alessio*

Corporal Ryan Amador, a 22-year-old food services specialist with Headquarters Battalion, 2d Marine Division, makes an inspection of the mess hall's food storage units, Tuesday. Amador's unit recently deployed here for stability and security operations as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

difference between mission accomplishment or failure.

"I'll put it this way," said Amador, "picture this camp without the mess hall. What would it be? Three times during the day and also during the night we make a wholesome meal that includes all of the food groups. And if that's not enough, we have dessert too."

In a place where just about everything is a scarcity, Amador ensures that all fruit, vegetables, meat and juices keep flowing continuously into the camp. His view on the job is that he's just giving back to the people who work alongside him.

Amador also coordinates the transportation of food through Ramadi, one of Iraq's most dangerous cities. Simply put, if the trucks don't roll in on time, Marines and other personnel on base don't eat. That can cause

a ripple in the overall mission.

"Basically, I make sure the trucks get here on time or the Marines and everyone else will go hungry," said Amador. "In a place like this, people can't have the comforts of home, but at least they can have a hot meal made right on the spot."

"All of us here are doing a good job," said Amador. "It's not easy doing this thing-going to war. For me, I guess I just feel like making a difference."

If Amador were to do it all over again, he says he might have picked the infantry. He admires the men on the front lines, who see danger around every corner.

"But in the end, I love my job because I feel like I'm a part of that too," said Amador. "And if I can be the one to keep them going, my job is done."